



HOW TO...

Back up Firefox settings

Mozilla Firefox is a great browser, but keeping all your profiles synchronised if you use a number of different PCs can be a chore. Julian Prokaza explains how to keep your settings sorted using a free utility

If you've used Mozilla Firefox for any length of time, you'll know what a great browser it is.

However, if you use a PC all day at work and have built up an extensive collection of bookmarks and saved passwords, it's a pain to be without them when you use your PC at home. And once you find a really useful add-on module, called an extension, you'll want access to it everywhere.

Firefox stores bookmarks, installed extensions, saved passwords and other personalised settings as 'profiles'. If you've only ever used Firefox fresh from its first installation, you'll be using the default profile (this is just its name, not its state), which stores its data in the default location. If you start Firefox from the command prompt with `firefox -p`, you can create a new profile and store its data wherever you like.

While the profile data can be accessed easily on a hard disk, transferring it from one PC to another isn't so simple. You can't just copy the profile data back and forth. That's not to say it can't be done – you just need the right tool. Just as Windows XP's Files and Settings Transfer wizard can move Internet Explorer configurations from PC to PC, MozBackup can do the same for Firefox.

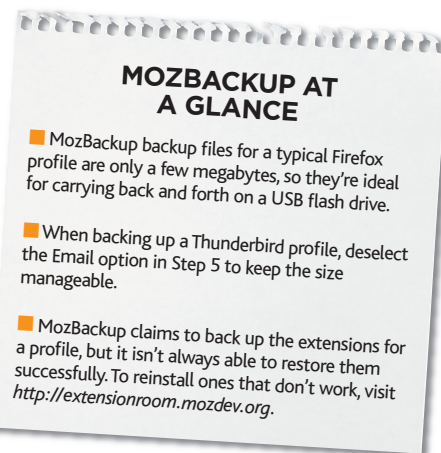
MozBackup is a free utility intended solely for backup purposes, making it handy for those rare occasions when Firefox gets confused and wipes out a profile for no obvious reason. Furthermore, you can back up one PC's Firefox profile and restore it on another PC, thus duplicating that profile. In other words, it's a simple way to transfer your personalised profiles not only between Firefox installations, but for Thunderbird too.

1 MozBackup is a free download from <http://mozbackup.jasnapaka.com>. You can download an installation file or a Zip file that contains all the files needed to run the program (`backup.exe`), but both versions of the program are used in the same way.

2 Make sure that any extensions you use with Firefox (or Thunderbird, if you're backing up its profiles) are up to date, to save updating them once you've transferred them to another PC. You can do this by clicking Extensions from the Tools menu in Firefox and clicking the Update button. Restart Firefox to complete the installation of any new extensions, then quit the program.

3 Start the MozBackup program and click Next to skip the welcome screen. Make sure the 'Backup a profile' option is selected, then select the program whose profile you want to back up – Mozilla Firefox, in this example. You can only back up one program's profiles at a time, though.

4 Click Next and select the profile you want to back up. If you haven't created a new profile in Firefox, just the default profile will be listed. MozBackup automatically names backup files with the name of the program and the date, but it's worth changing the default save location. Click the Browse button and create a new folder within My Documents specifically for your profile backups.



5 Click Next and MozBackup will ask if you want to password-protect the backup file. Once you've decided whether you want to do that, you need to select what you want to back up. The options available will vary according to the program to which the profile belongs. For Firefox, it's worth choosing everything but the cache. Click Next, and the backup will be made.

6 Restoring a profile is the exact reverse of Steps 3 to 5, except that you have to specify a backup file to use in Step 4. You can also choose which profile to restore the backup to; just take care not to choose the wrong one if there are multiple Firefox profiles, or you'll wipe out someone's settings. **CS**

